



**Alberta
Cattle
Commission**

GRASSroutes

The Alberta Cattle Producer Monthly Update

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Call us at (403) 275-4400

Producer Profile:

Arno Doerksen



Arno Doerksen and family run a pure-bred and commercial cow herd at **Gem**. They background and finish calves in their feedlot and do some custom feed-ing. Arno is Alberta Cattle Commission vice-chairman and a director to Canadian Cattlemen's Association where he serves as chairman of the animal health and meat inspection committee. Arno has been instrumental in the industry's efforts to manage foreign animal disease threats.

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Good News on U.S. Country of Origin Labelling Issue

A resolution passed by the official U.S. cattle producer organization is welcome news for the Canadian beef cattle industry. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) now supports voluntary country of origin labelling. Previously the NCBA had supported mandatory labelling.

Mandatory country of origin labelling is a threat to the Canadian industry because it increases handling costs for U.S. retailers, and could cause them to stop selling

imported beef. An amendment to the U.S. Farm Bill calling for mandatory labelling is currently being debated. Having the NCBA add its voice to that of U.S. packers and retailers opposing this measure is a good sign.

Fifty per cent of Canada's beef production is exported. Of this, at least 75 per cent goes to the United States. It is hoped the NCBA will be the catalyst for having the mandatory labelling clause removed from the U.S. Farm Bill currently under debate.

Canada Learns Lessons From European Foot-and Mouth Disease Experience

Canada added new knowledge to its foreign animal disease strategy following visits to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands by a group of industry and government representatives. The information obtained is helping to determine policies and procedures to minimize the impact of a foreign animal disease outbreak in Canada.

Canadian veterinarians and representatives from the beef, pork, sheep, dairy and genetics sectors gained knowledge comparing the situations in England and

the Netherlands. In England, Foot-and-Mouth Disease ravaged the country for an extended period of time, but in the Netherlands, the outbreak was under control within a month.

British and Dutch representatives talked candidly about their experiences. They stressed the need to plan ahead, the need to respond fast and quickly impose stop movement orders. The new knowledge obtained by the delegation will help Canada complete its foreign animal disease strategy.

National ID Program Key in Asian Trade

The beef industry has been successful in convincing Japanese consumers Canada produces safe, healthy beef, and the Canadian Cattle Identification Program is being credited with a big part of that success. While some beef exporting countries experienced a decline in sales to Japan of up to 30 per cent after three cases of BSE were diagnosed, Canadian exports increased 10 per cent in the same period.

The Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF) launched a promotional campaign based on the Canadian Cattle Identification Program's traceable ear tag system. This campaign was able to demonstrate the Canadian beef industry's commitment to food safety. Other countries, including Australia, the United States and Japan are now publicly talking about their efforts to develop individual animal traceback programs, but Canada had the advantage of leading the way.

